



**State of Illinois**  
JB Pritzker, Governor



**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
Omer Osman, Acting Secretary

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## **Illinois 178 bridge over Illinois in Utica complete, improving access to Starved Rock, Matthiessen state parks**

**UTICA** – The Illinois Department of Transportation announced today the completion of the new Illinois 178 bridge over the Illinois River, improving local commerce, regional mobility and providing a new gateway to top tourism draws at Starved Rock and Matthiessen state parks. Traffic on the existing bridge will be switched to the new structure the morning of Wednesday, Oct. 7.

“The new Illinois 178 bridge will benefit the region for years to come and serve as another reminder how transportation improves quality of life in our communities,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “We’re especially proud of the teamwork with local stakeholders to transform the bridge from what had been viewed as detriment into an asset.”

Miscellaneous improvements and minor traffic impacts will continue through the fall, with the demolition of the old Illinois 178 bridge to be scheduled later this year.

Construction started in 2017 on the new \$27.4 million bridge, replacing a steel truss structure built in 1962 that lacked shoulders. In addition to a modern design that includes shoulders to accommodate vehicle breakdowns, emergency personnel and first responders, the new bridge features a path that allows pedestrians and bicyclists to safely travel between the state parks and historic downtown Utica.

Starved Rock and Matthiessen state parks draw almost 3 million visitors each year, making them among the top tourist destinations in the state, according to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

“We’re excited to see the new bridge, not just because of the appeal, but also to tie Starved Rock to the village,” said Utica Mayor David Stewart. “The addition of the bike path is an asset for our residents.”

Over the next six years, IDOT is planning to improve more than 3,300 miles of highway and 8.4 million square feet of bridge deck as part of the Rebuild Illinois capital program, which is investing \$33.2 billion into all modes of transportation. Year One included approximately \$2.7 billion of improvements statewide on 1,706 miles of highway, 128 bridges and 228 additional safety improvements.